

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education



Testimony before the Council of the District of Columbia
Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, March 31, 2009

**“Public Hearing on the Mayor’s Proposed FY 2010 Budget Request for the
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education”**

Victor Reinoso
Deputy Mayor for Education

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee. I appear before you today to discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2010 budget for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. The proposed budget reflects priority investments designed to achieve the Mayor’s education reform efforts and will enable us to provide important oversight and leadership necessary to succeed.

Functions of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) is organized around four main functions: acting as chief advisor to the Mayor on the District’s education strategy; coordinating across

educational institutions and city agencies to improve child and youth outcomes; developing partnerships in support of public education initiatives; and providing leadership, oversight, and support for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM), and the Office of the Ombudsman.

FY 2010 Budget Overview

The FY 2010 budget for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education reflects fiscally responsible support for ongoing initiatives and investment in strategic areas of need. Overall, the proposed FY 2010 budget for the DME is \$4,038,969, a 17.4% decrease from the approved FY 2009 budget of \$4,892,248, and supports 21 FTEs.

FY 2010 funding is distributed among three activities: Agency Oversight and Support, Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC), and the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education. The majority of the funding is in the ICSIC activity, and supports funding for evidence-based programs, including the DC START pilot program.

Initiatives of the DME

Next year, my office will continue to build on the strong foundation we have begun in supporting the Mayor's education reform efforts. Specifically, I will continue to provide leadership and guidance to not only the education team, but all agencies that can have a positive impact on schools, children, and learners of all ages. As DCPS, OSSE, and OPEFM move forward in implementing their plans, it is critical that the work remain aligned and coordinated, that the team moves at the same pace in support of each other, and that we make as much progress as

possible as quickly as possible. I am responsible for ensuring this happens, and I have set up my office and our priorities with this goal in mind.

FY 2010 presents new opportunities and levels of reform to our efforts. Next year we will expand opportunities for career technical education and training for adults, including building on existing programs and partnerships at Cardozo, Phelps, and Roosevelt. Planning for this initiative is a multi-agency collaboration and will set the stage for additional opportunities in the future. Also, my office will work with DCPS and public charter schools on increasing access to alternative education programs for youth who are over-age and under-credited.

Additional activities of the DME in FY 2010 will include:

- Working with DCPS to identify strategies and partnerships to support theme schools for STEM, arts, and world languages programming;
- Monitoring and facilitating progress toward meeting the requirements of key court cases governing special education;
- Assisting with the implementation of the Master Facilities Plan, ensuring a strong linkage between DCPS, OPEFM, and other agencies, and supporting better utilization of school facility space in general, including making space available to public charter schools;
- Working with OSSE and stakeholders on the implementation of literacy initiatives for adults and adolescents, and continuing support for the Double the Numbers coalition to increase the number of DC students prepared for and graduating from college;
- Building a strong and unified system of accountability by working with OSSE, DCPS, and PCSB; and

- Working with DCPS in its efforts to develop a student recruitment campaign.

ICSIC

ICSIC will continue to play a critical role in coordinating the resources of the District government to support education efforts and in supporting new and existing programs that can effectively address many of the issues presented by and to our children, youth, and families. We are already seeing early results with the DC START early intervention pilot program, and I am excited to expand to an additional four schools next school year. Both Second Step and Life Skills, evidence-based programs started this school year, are taking hold – next year, we will fund train-the-trainer models of these programs and ongoing technical assistance to ensure that the programs develop sustainability. And we will continue training for staff for both Primary Project and the SRO Training programs.

Additionally, we plan to implement new evidence-based programs:

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) – DCPS’ discipline policy is undergoing significant revisions so that a student’s punishment matches the infraction. The next step is to prevent these incidents from occurring. Beginning in the fall, we plan to pilot Therapeutic Crisis Intervention in eight schools, including six high schools. Through training and technical assistance, TCI will change attitudes and give staff the skills and knowledge to help young people, to prevent incidents from occurring and to de-escalate potential crises. In these schools, I expect we will see a more consistent response to incident reporting and follow-up, increased staff confidence in managing crises, and most importantly, a decrease in violence and verbal assaults.

- Alternative to Incarceration – Alternative to Incarceration programs offer a less costly and more effective option to rehabilitation than incarceration. The ATI program will give the court an option to sentence non-violent juvenile offenders who might otherwise be incarcerated, to treatment, education and in some cases training in the community, while remaining under the strict supervision of the courts. Clinicians and case managers are “on-call” 24/7 to support the child and the family. Not only do ATI programs cut costs and reduce jail time, but they also rehabilitate the child in their community. We are in planning discussions with the Court and hope to firm up details shortly.
- Child Parent Relationship Therapy, or Filial Therapy – The most important relationship in a child’s life is his or her relationship with the primary caregiver. Many of our parents struggle with their own issues and do not have the communication skills necessary to meet their child’s emotional needs – this can lead to social, emotional, and behavioral problems for their child. Filial therapy teaches parents how to interact with their child – to become the therapeutic agent. It is a short-term intervention that builds the parent’s skills in order to meet the child’s needs.

These programs, and the continuing focus of ICSIC, are about getting government to work together and bringing innovation to some of our toughest challenges facing children and families.

Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman plays an important role for District residents seeking information and solutions to issues arising from our public education institutions. After more than one full year of operation, we are beginning to see trends in case types and frequency. We have adjusted

the Ombudsman office to reflect service needs. Additionally, I have directed the interim director to evaluate outreach methods and to improve data collection and analysis so that we gain an even stronger understanding of the Ombudsman work moving forward.

This concludes my written testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Council, for the opportunity to discuss the FY 2010 budget of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. I am happy to answer any questions.